



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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COUNTY SMOKING BAN IN RESTAURANTS MOVES FORWARD WITH COMMITTEE APPROVAL

The Montgomery County Council's Health & Human Services Committee today voted to recommend approval of a proposal that would protect the health of restaurant customers and workers by prohibiting smoking in County eating and drinking establishments.

Voting in favor of the measure were Councilmembers George Leventhal and Tom Perez. Councilmember Steve Silverman abstained, pending full Council discussion of the effective date.

"This legislation will protect County residents from the known health hazards of second-hand smoke," said Committee chair George Leventhal. "We will be following in the footsteps of states such as California, Delaware, and Connecticut and cities such as New York and Boston who already have moved to smoke-free restaurants."

"Nearly nine out of ten Montgomery County residents don't smoke. This isn't about whether smokers have the right to smoke or not. Of course they do. The question is whether other people should be harmed by second-hand smoke. People used to be able to smoke in elevators, airlines, and even hospitals. Now they don't.

"Some establishments may be affected but the experience in other states and localities has shown none of the calamities predicted by the restaurant associations. Smoking is prohibited in all Maryland workplaces except restaurants. It's time to change that."

The legislation would prohibit all smoking in eating and drinking establishments in the County except private clubs. It would not apply to non-enclosed outdoor eating areas. and would go in effect 91 days after enactment into law.

The proposal now goes to the full Council, which is tentatively scheduled to vote on the measure on July 1.

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